April 5, 1989

Dear Gail,

On March 17th, 1989, myfriend of many years,Jerry White, made his transition due to complications of AIDS. He was the 4th friend and colleague inless than 4 months that I have lost to AIDS. He had been living in Santa Barbara for the last several years where he had done most of his AIDS activism. A most humane man—it was a terrible loss, both for me personally and humanitarians in general. I traveled up to Santa Barbara for the memorial service. The service was held outdoors in a park high on a hill overlooking Santa Barbara. Most of the 100-plus persons who attended brought large bouquets of pastel-colored helium-filled balloons which they released at the end of the ceremony. Throughout the event a red-tailed hawk (Jerry's favorite bird) circled overhead bringing smiles and tears, and lifting our spirits.

I've enclosed a packet of materials that I prepared for Jerry's San Diego friends whowere unable to attend the memorial service. I thought you might be interested in learning a little about someone who meant so much to me. I feel blessed to have had so many wonderful committed friends. But at the same time, it compounds thesense of loss. I direct your attention to "The Busness of Canaries", a poem written especially for Jerry during his final days by David Oliveira. I've never been much of a fan of poetry, but I found this piece to be one of the most powerful and moving poems I've ever read. Part III expresses some of the anger that is so very much a part of the entire AIDS epidemic.

I've just spent another four days in the hospital—got out on Monday, April 3rd. I had had about a week of gradually escalating flu-like symptoms—productive cough, shortness of breath, constantly dripping nose, and low-grade fever. But last Thursday night I woke about 11 P.M. with a fever of 104.8, disorientation, non-stop coughing, and eventually vomiting. I was afraid to be alone, so I called a friend who took to the emergency room. An IV with antibiotics was started and my fever came down rapidly and stayed down. It is really a mystery exactly what caused that febrile crisis, because I still have the chest congestion, etc. The four days spent in the hospital were for running a bunch of tests to try to locate the source of infection. All that was found was an

enlarged liver and some slightly elevated liver studies. CAT scan, liver sonogram, and gallium scan showed nothing specific. So what can I tell you?

I'm back home and up to my old tricks. I'm producing and art auction to be held on May 21st at the Omni Hotel (San Diego's newest and poshest) to benefit the Lesbian/Gay Archives of San Diego. I plan to have $25,000 worth of art available for auction—and all of that donated! It's the biggest event that I've ever produced single-handedly and I'm scared to death. The 3 days that I spent in Santa Barbara and the 4 days in the hospital have set my schedule back at a time when I could least afford it.

My community continues to honor me. The Lesbian & Gay Men's Community Center is having its first annual founders banquet in May and has selected me as the honoree. Further, the Gay Pride Parade and Festival Committee has asked me to be one of the 2 co-grand marshalls for the June parade this year. Can you dig it?! So you see, I must stay well!

Have you heard about our record-breaking heat wave? Ninety-three degrees yeaterday, ninety-five today, and another record breaker is predicted for tomorrow—and this is only April! I hope that this is not and indication of things to come for this summer. It is difficult enough if you have normal health but it is devoustating to those of us with respiratory problems. It is very dry heat that is very hard on skin and mucus membranes. My nose, which runs constantly, is raw, cracked and bleeding inside. Wiping is a real challange.

I guess that's the major news for now. Let me hear from you. Share this with Mom, please.

Much love to you,

Jess